

Knox Regional Communications Center Executive Board

Wednesday
June 14, 2017
3:00 p.m.

A meeting of the Executive Board of the Knox Regional Communications Center took place on **Wednesday, June 14, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.** in the Knox County Emergency Management Agency Office.

Executive Board members in attendance: Camden Fire Chief Chris Farley; Adam Miceli, Rockland Fire/EMS; Craig Cooley, Rockport Police Department; and Knox County EMA Director Ray Sisk. **Members absent:** Jesse Thompson, Union EMS; Rockland PD Deputy Chief Chris Young; and Ruston Barnard, Rockland Fire/EMS.

Others in attendance: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Knox Regional Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, and Administrative Assistant Candice Richards.

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| I. | 3:00 | Meeting Called To Order |
| II. | 3:01 | Action Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approval of Board Minutes of April 19, 2017. |
| III. | 3:05 | Discussion Items: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update on Newer Employees2. Update of Supervisor Position3. Update on Deputy Director Position4. Employee Meeting5. Fire Protocol Meeting |
| IV. | | Other Business |
| V. | | Adjourn |

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Farley at 3:08 p.m.

II. Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of April 19, 2017.

- Craig Cooley motioned to approve the minutes. Ray Sisk seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

III. Discussion Items

1. Update on Newer Employees.

Director Lothrop explained that since the last meeting there had one resignation – Timothy Robinson. His resignation had nothing to do with the Center or any issues there; he resigned due to some personal life issues that he felt would prevent him from being able to commit the amount of time to the KRCC that was necessary. In two weeks the Center is having a “meet and greet” with some applicants to explain about the job. Director Lothrop is meeting on Friday with a person currently working as a dispatcher and part-time police officer in Massachusetts. The individual has a family summer home in South Thomaston and he is very interested in relocating here permanently.

2. Update of Supervisor Position.

Director Lothrop explained that Dispatcher John Gamage has been promoted to Dispatch Supervisor as of June 11th. Two applicants were tested for the promotion but one person didn't meet the minimum score requirements stated in the union contract, so she wasn't able to continue to the next step, which is the oral board. Laurie Bouchard is going to meet with Supervisor Gamage very soon to go over the Managers Handbook with him. Director Lothrop said that he also had emailed County Attorney Peter Marchesi about the classes that he teaches, one of which is on supervision. He said that he is hoping to have Attorney Marchesi provide that training to the Executive Board and any employees that need to take it. He said that he was also looking at also offering training through Kaplan University for supervisory skills. It would be intended for current supervisors but it would be a good career building opportunity for any employee that wanted to do it because in the future they may decide to go for a promotion to supervisor.

3. Update on Deputy Director Position.

Director Lothrop explained that the County has advertized twice for the position. Three applications were received on the first try, but none of them met the minimum qualifications. The second time, one application was received, which sounded very promising at first. The person was from Louisiana with 22 years of experience as a dispatcher. When Director Lothrop and Laurie Bouchard did a Skype interview with her, it was discovered that the applicant only dispatches fire, and had zero experience in dispatching either law enforcement or EMS, which would be a huge part of what a dispatcher does in Knox County. The applicant was also a "shift leader" and not an actual supervisor – she was not involved in the discipline of other employees. Her salary was over \$86,000 per year and she is provided with a county vehicle, which obviously wouldn't be offered up here. Once learning about that, the applicant pretty much bowed out on her own.

There was a discussion about whether the lack of applicants indicates that some changes need to be made to the job description for the deputy director position. Specifically mentioned was the technical requirements because there might be individuals getting out of the military that have the kind of management skills and work ethic that the County is looking for, but don't have any experience in dispatching. It is easier to teach dispatching than it is to teach leadership skills. Some of the issues with trying to attract a seasoned dispatch supervisor from another agency in Maine is that the person will likely be making far more than the position is paying because they are currently a union employee and can get overtime, while the deputy director position is salaried. It wouldn't be worth it to someone to move here for less money unless the person was hoping to eventually replace the director when he retires. After discussing scaling back the technical requirements in the job description, but keeping the same level of supervisory duties so that the position stays at a management level, Director Lothrop said that he would talk to Laurie Bouchard about revising the job description. The Executive Board wants to receive a copy of the job description before it goes to the County Commission for approval in order to be able to make suggestions.

4. Employee Meeting.

Director Lothrop explained that he had held a mandatory staff meeting with all dispatch employees on June 1st. He went over the employee satisfaction survey with them. The results of that survey for the dispatch center were very negative overall. The employees were not able to see their individual scores or find out who said which comments but they could see how the department did compared to the rest of the county. He discussed the 5 top scoring items in the survey, but spent more time on the lowest scoring items. Since he felt that the dispatchers had a lack of understanding about what the job requirements are for dispatch supervisors, and seem to think that they are just being picked on by the supervisors, he reviewed the job descriptions with the staff. The supervisors are just doing what they're supposed to do. He also talked about equality and fairness. He said that he wanted to make sure the employees understand that he is there for them, not just the supervisors.

Director Lothrop said that he walked away from the meeting feeling like it went well, but almost right afterwards there was an incident with an employee posting something rather negative on Facebook the same day John Gamage was promoted. The post said it was "a dark, dark day in dispatch" and that

prompted phone calls and messages from other departments and other people in the community asking what was wrong. The employees need to give John a chance and Director Lothrop said that he made it clear that he was not going to take behavior like that anymore. Some of the other topics discussed included the employees needing to take some ownership for things, working on a public relations video, personal cell phone use in the Center, fully completing complaint sheets, use of comp time, call outs, etc. He also instructed the dispatchers to have quarterly meetings for just the dispatchers so they can identify the issues, figure out what do they need, put it in writing, and present it to Director Lothrop so he can address the problems.

Director Lothrop noted that a couple weeks after the meeting he pulled aside a few different employees just to get their take on how they felt about the department meeting. Two of them were the employees who have been the most vocal in their negativity. He was pleased that these employees felt the meeting went well, that they believed that Director Lothrop was sincere that he cares about them and wants to hear their concerns.

5. Fire Protocol Meeting.

Director Lothrop explained that training is going to start later this year. There will be two “kick off” meetings/trainings on June 29th at 9 am and then at 6 p.m. (a repeat of the 9 a.m. one) for communications center personnel – training, managers, supervisors, who are part of the implementation process, fire personnel, etc. It will be held in the EOC training room. September 14 – 16 will be the training for Knox dispatch staff.

IV. Other Business

The Future of Dispatching

Director Lothrop did quick run-through of a Power Point presentation that he used during the staff meeting. He wanted the Executive Board to see it because he also intends to use it during the quarterly Budget Committee meeting in August. He also showed two short videos about FirstNet/NextGen. The presentation explained issues with personnel and technology that are going to come about as a direct result when FirstNet is implemented. The issue of who is going to pay for it and potential liability issues haven’t been resolved.

Jesse Thompson asked a question about I Am Responding

Administrator Hart explained that he received an email from Executive Board member Jesse Thompson about a concern he had since he wasn’t able to come to today’s meeting. Jesse wanted to know what sense there is to push agencies into using IAR if the dispatchers aren’t going to use it. This concern was relating to an ambulance call the night before that was toned out twice. It was discussed that perhaps the dispatchers need a little more training on IAR, but the KRCC can’t control whether responders are logging in. If they don’t, then the dispatchers won’t even know they’re responding. The Center will still tone out regardless because IAR is secondary notification.

Schedule next meeting

- September 13th at 3 p.m. at EMA (will be discussing the Emergency Operations Plan for continuity)

V. Adjourn

- Craig Cooley motioned to adjourn. Adam Miceli seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards
Administrative Assistant